



Although the diesel engine was never shut down, Cargile carefully checked fuel filters and oil level daily

by Jim Quint

It had to be the ultimate trailerboat cruise—New York to Paris in a 30-footer. But it proved that skipper Allen Cargile knew what he was doing, after all, when he set out with a crew of three in an eight-foot-wide planing-hull Cutter family cruiser right off his own production line in Nashville, Tennessee.

The voyage took 31 days and, as could be expected, all the unexpected things happened. The confidently predicted beautiful weather turned into a horrendous storm which taxed the capabilities of boat and crew—and taught Cargile something new about handling stern drives in rough seas. With four radios they lost all contact with the world for days. And a crewman became so seasick Cargile had to interrupt his

The voyage, in a 30-footer, took 31 exciting days

planned non-stop passage to put the unhappy man ashore in Newfoundland.

But Cargile and his remaining two crewmen made it to Paris, and showed what Cargile had said all along—his boat could take it. And the name of the game, he insists, is *preparation*.

Who but Cargile would have demanded that Standard Oil steamclean the insides of their tanker trucks before delivering 1200 gallons of diesel fuel for the Cutter?

And where do you put 1200 gallons of fuel in a 30-foot trailerable?

Cargile had cleaned out the lockers and installed extra fuel tanks, deep in the hull for stability. An additional tank sat in the middle of the cabin, to be used first and then jettisoned.

"We designed the fuel loading so that with most tanks full the boat was basically self-righting. If we were caught nearly empty and needed ballast, they could be filled with sea water."

Why diesel? "I didn't really want to carry around 1200 gallons of gasoline. So I asked the Volvo Penta people for suggestions, and they came up with their new 130-horsepower AQD 40 diesel, coupled with their 280 outdrive which I already liked, and I said let's go."

He added some other equipment: radar, Loran, autopilot, RDF, compass, sextant, and four radio systems—200-watt SSB, 100-watt back-up SSB, VHF, and a hand-held aircraft frequency transceiver for the life raft. And all kinds of safety and rescue gear.

Then began days of planning what to do if all systems failed, one after another.

"Preparation is the most important part. If a person will remember to keep it simple, and think ahead what to do if everything quits—you've got to have an answer.

"I had already decided that if we ran into storms a couple hundred miles out of New York and the engine and compass were working right we'd go ahead and DR all the way."

And that, it turned out, was what they did.

Cargile, an ex-Navy fighter pilot and long-time admirer of Charles Lindbergh, named his boat *The Spirit of Nashville*. For his crew he enlisted another ex-Navy fighter pilot, Ed Gillespie, now test pilot for North American Rockwell; a Nashville friend, Bill Flanagan; and Jerry Shake of WNGE-TV in Nashville who was to do a documentary of the cruise. It was Shake who had to be put ashore, sadly, in Newfoundland.

Loading *Spirit* up with twice her own 6500-pound weight put her waterline a foot below the surface as she pulled out of New York Harbor on 16 July. But for five days everything went as planned and the weather was perfect—"the rosiest forecast I've heard in 30 years of boating and flying."

On the sixth day the seas began to build, and by

continued